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ABSTRACT

This book presents a theory of how adults learn by making meaning of their experiences. Chapter 1 gives an overview of an emerging transformation theory of adult learning, compares it with other theories of adult learning, and describes the dynamics of the process through which one makes meaning of one's experience. Chapter 2 examines the way one's meaning perspectives or habits of expectation serve as perceptual and cognitive codes to structure the way one perceives, thinks, feels, and acts on one's experience. Chapter 3 has three broad topics: the nature of intentional learning; Habermas's theory of communicative action, which provides the social theoretical context for transformation theory; and instrumental, communicative, and emancipatory or reflective learning. Chapter 4 explains the concept of reflection and shows how reflection can change or transform both meaning schemes and meaning perspectives. Chapter 5 describes distortions in meaning perspectives that can limit one's ability to make meaning of experiences. Chapter 6 describes the role of perspective transformation in adult development, summarizes several authors' overviews of perspective transformation and its dynamics, and cites studies of perspective transformation. Chapter 7 discusses philosophical, ethical, social, and methodological issues in adult education that are raised by transformation theory and suggests possible ways to resolve these issues. A 171-item bibliography and index are appended. (YLB)

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